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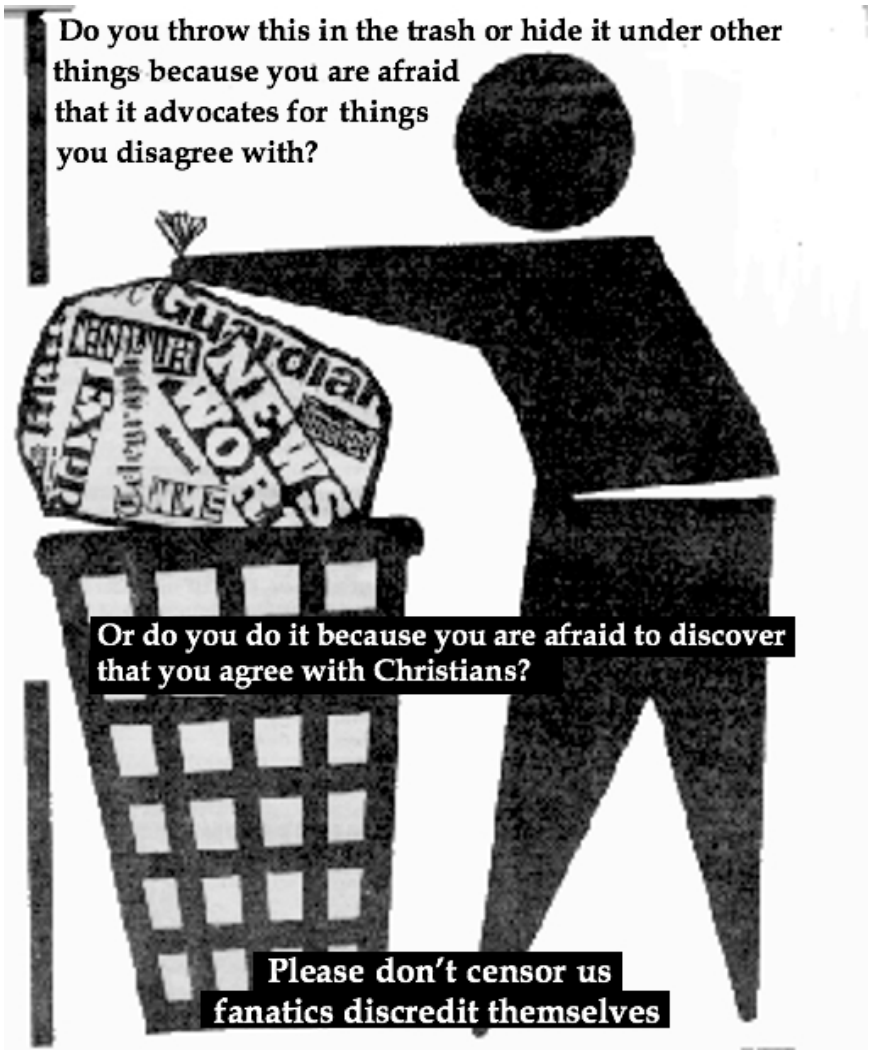
Do you throw this in the trash or hide it under other things because you are afraid that it advocates for things you disagree with?
Or do you do it because you are afraid to discover that you agree with Christians?
Please don't censor us
fanatics discredit themselves

FROM AN EDITOR IN DISTRESS:

February 9 2009

We've been given a mixed blessing here at The Christian Radical. The number of readers is always increasing, the traffic to our blog has doubled in a single year and has become a news source in it's own right providing daily updated on news related to Catholic Workers, peace activism, and international current events. Everything has increased except the number of people doing the work. Karl does a wonderful job editing the drafts of your articles and giving me advice when I need it but for my part the work of updating the blog every day, finding news and video content for it every night, writing and answering e-mails managing the online subscriptions and doing the layout art editing and formatting and formatting for the monthly is too much for me to do well.

I'm ashamed to admit that for me to post all the news items that appear on the blog each day I am lucky if I read half of them myself, they arrive largely by way of e-mail lists and go up sometimes totally unchecked. I'm embarrassed by this, it's no way to run a news website and it's a disgrace but for some months now I've been feeling overwhelmed by what needs to get done and Karl already balances a full time job with his contribution to this effort. I've tried posting to Craigslist and to a couple of listserves to find another editor, someone who will be able to take on either the blog or the monthly but as of yet I've received no responses. No matter what happens things are going to have to change. I don't want to go from a monthly to a quarterly and I hope to keep the blog a daily news resource but in order to do these things in a way that I am not

embarrassed by I will have to begin by cutting back how much goes up on the blog. From now on what you see online is what I have been able to personally read/watch beforehand. This will reduce the number of articles that go up each day but I hope that the quality and consistency increases. Also There will be no official zine this month. It's been too late in coming partially due to technical failures and partially due to a communication error between Karl and I. I have been weighing my options, do I have the time to make a February issue even if it doesn't go to print in Vancouver? Should I postpone the zine until things are more settled? I don't want to have to do it but at this point it's my opinion that if I threw together a zine now it would come a full two weeks late and would have the feel of being thrown together. The articles have been received and they are edited and a real print and online version will come out in March, this is my promise. In the mean time I hope and I pray that someone amongst you will help us out and volunteer to co-edit this large but rewarding project. Ideally you would live in Vancouver BC but I am willing to work with someone long distance provided that there is sufficient communication and the work gets done to my satisfaction.

If you are interested in joining Karl and I as part of the editorial effort please write to me at the.christian.radical.zine@gmail.com

Thank you in advance, whomever you are.
Chris Williamson-Rooney

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THE NEW AMERICAN DREAM

MIKE PALECEK INTERVIEWED BY CHRIS .W. ROONEY

Mike Palecek is by any standards a prolific writer but few people have heard of him or the eleven books he's written in the past eight years. The Christian Radical's Chris Rooney recently sent him a list of questions for an interview about the man, the books and particularly the most recent one "Guests of the Nation" published by Seventh Street Press.

CHRIS ROONEY: Mike, thanks for doing this interview with me. You had your first book published in 2000 and have written more than one a year since then, what's that like? What Moved you to begin your first book and can you tell the readers about it?

MIKE: Well, I came out of the '80s very drained from several years of civil disobedience, jail, prison, community life. I was psychologically and emotionally distraught, I guess is one way to put it. So, I had to look for another mission in life, other than resistance at Offutt AFB. I chose journalism, and when journalism, small-town newspaper work, didn't seem to be enough, I picked novel writing as a way to speak.

My first book was KGB, which stands for Killing George Bush. It's placed in a county jail. It came out in 2000, I believe. The inmates read about the arrest of Pinochet for war crimes and talk amongst themselves and decide that we also have war criminals in America that nobody seems to be doing anything about. They decide to do something about it.

CR: were you moved to write by the same force that inspired you to run for congress?

MIKE: The same force, hmm. I suppose, but I would only have a wild guess as to what that force is. Personality disorder? Holy Spirit? Ego? Allen The Alien? Something good? Something bad? I think we all wonder about those things, at least I do.

Well, anyway, Congress, yes, I saw it as a challenge, and an opportunity to speak out. I think the Democrats are very weak in so many ways and I tried to do major surgery, install a backbone. I wasn't entirely successful, but as with all the others things, I tried.

CR: Tell me about taking on the IRS? There's a link to a DM Register story about it on your website but the link is a dead end. Are you a war tax resister? Will you continue to protest once troops have been taken out of Iraq?

MIKE: I didn't know it was a dead link. It was okay awhile ago. Maybe it changes as the newspaper's archives change? Anyway, some years I will send a tax form with a black "X" through it along with an explanation letter. One year I sent a short letter saying I would not cooperate because Bush did 9/11. The next year it said I would not support the war.

I also did it once way back when I ran for Congress. So, as the Democratic Party candidate for the U.S. House in the 5th District of Iowa, I did the same thing, with the note saying I would not support killing and war, but wanted the money to go to human needs. I walked from our home in Sheldon to Sioux City, it took about a week, and got almost zero press coverage. Not what I had hoped. I got a similar letter from the IRS saying I had to change my mind and submit a new form or pay a $500 fine for frivolous filing. I got another letter like that and then a third letter that in effect said "never mind."

This time the fine is $5,000. Since I got the letter in September, I think it was, I have not heard back from the IRS. I did not respond to their letter that said I needed to get my mind right.

CR: Why did you go to Oregon in '78? What did you hope to find there and what took you back to Iowa?

MIKE: Oh, Oregon was just my big awesome adventure, seeing if there is something else out there but main street in Norfolk, Nebraska. I took my dog and drove my dad's '59 Chevy, bought a cowboy hat, tried to join a monastery, but they wouldn't let me keep my dog, so I came back and went to the seminary in St. Paul. The same trip every young man or woman makes. Actually, it was back to Norfolk, Nebraska. I'm not from Iowa, though we've lived here for a while now.

CR: When and how did you come to join the 9/11 truth movement, what brought you there? Did you lose family in NYC?

MIKE: No. I didn't know anyone in the attacks. I don't know, I think it was probably a couple of websites, a couple of books, maybe it was A New Pearl Harbour, by David Griffin, that got me started. When all of that was happening, it was just a flurry of oppression that I felt, claustrophobia closing in. I put a little sign on the fire hydrant out in front of our house in those days that said, "The United States Air Force, Our Terrorists." And we had a peace sign we put up, and I put pieces of paper in our widows that said something like Stop The Bombing, Don't Bomb, something like that.

I hated those days, because I knew we were going to bomb and everyone wanted it, and I think it's so stupid and so anti-spiritual, anti-God and everyone around here claims to be so for-God. You start to hate people. And I wrote about it. Tried to fight, tried to throw bricks, toss bombs, fire a rifle, with my books.

It doesn't' work, not in the way you hope it would.

When it happened I was writing a weekly column for an alternative newspaper in Sioux City, so I wrote my column about the attacks, something too sympathetic to the attackers for the editor. At that time I did not suspect the U.S. government. I was more of the mind of "good for them," someone is finally fighting back. The column did not run, so I quit the paper.

CR: Tell me a bit about writing your books, is there a process you go through when you begin to write?

MIKE: I really don't know. I guess one answer could be that you are sitting somewhere, driving somewhere and your eyes glaze over and then you reach for the Shopper's Guide and tear off a corner and find a pencil under the sofa cushion and write a note, and then it goes along like that.

But before that there are years of doubt, of trying to read novels to learn how, hauling how-to-write books home from the library, reading grammar books, reading dictionaries, which can be just an excuse to begin, but some of that is necessary, at least it was for me. I'm not really a reader.

CR: And what about Guests of the Nation?

MIKE: Well, what about it? Oh, the process. It's an attempt to tell what I think might be the truth about 9/11, that Bush and Cheney and Rove and all those planned and carried it out, in order to create this anxiety and storm and dust and steal billions of dollars under the cover of the dust.

I wanted it to be short, and with pictures, to show, finally, what really happened, images we haven't been allowed to see otherwise.

The pictures are good, but not as graphic as I had envisioned.

CR: You've done time for protesting at Offutt AFB and served time for civil disobedience including a stint in a federal prison. How has that shaped your experience of America today, what did you take with you from that?

MIKE: Well, it makes me think America is evil, through and through, despicable, stupid, heartless, idiots, with no idea whatsoever what it is about or who this God is they claim to worship.

I think that's pretty realistic actually. And I think it's a view you can only get from inside, maybe inside a prison, inside a ghetto, inside a mental institution, like that.

CR: How did you come to the conclusions which you draw in Guests of the Nation? I had some trouble with a few of the chapters because on the one hand it seems so preposterous and at the same time, given what is currently known about American war crimes your description of the executions of American airlines passengers or Israeli Military collusion in the destruction of the twin towers doesn't seem too far a stretch.

MIKE: Well, I read and studied. There's a lot available on the Internet and in books. I don't know if my conclusion about the passengers is correct, but it's a best-guess. They went somewhere, something happened to them. It's important to keep wondering and thinking about that. Listen to Bob McIllvaine, search for him on You Tube. That will get you right in the gut and then you will start wondering too.

CR: As someone who believes that 9/11 was a false flag operation but hasn't spent as much time as you have in studying the sequence of events and aftershocks I found frustrating that in your book you don't provide anything like a list of additional reading or a resource list of any kind. I know that much of that information must exist online but it can be daunting for the average person to try and inform himself do you have any suggestions on where to get more information?

MIKE: Google "9/11 Truth" and make some popcorn. And begin.

CR: You've mentioned in other interviews that you turn your book tours into protests of their own, can you tell me more about that? Also what's it like when you go on the road. Do you ever encounter opposition or counter demonstrators when you promote your books?

MIKE: I don't know if I said that, maybe I did, anyway, yeah, it was the tax protest thing. I sent in those letters before I left for the book tours in spring 2007 and spring 2008, and then I read my letter at my readings, try to ruffle as many feathers as I can, stir the pot. It did not create the stir I had hoped, to tell you the truth.

No, and it's because I'm such a small deal. Nobody knows about me. A counter demonstration would mean you are getting somewhere. I have been pretty much spinning my tires, but I'm still out there, spinning, spinning, wearing my tires down to bald.

CR: In order to get your material published easier you started Seventh Street Press what has gone into that and what kinds of advice would you have to offer

other writers who face the prospects of obscurity in the face of a near-monolithic writers market?

MIKE: Not much has gone into it, really. I just looked out the front window and figured out where I lived and founded a press. Someone else does the layout, someone else does the art, someone else the website. As long as I keep my little job and get everyone paid, it works. And then we can sell our fifty copies of each book and keep sailing along.

I don't have any advice. I am competitive. I think that might come from being in newspaper work. I want to be first, best, and win. So my advice would be, get an application to work at Wal-Mart.

CR: Now that the prospect of troop withdrawal in Iraq and the closing of Guantanamo Bay what challenges to you see ahead for the American anti-war movement in general and the 9/11 truth movement in particular?

MIKE: I don't think in those terms, at least I don't think I do. I think what I do is just think of what can I do, what should I do, what do I need to do to not make this day, this week, this life a total waste?

CR: Do you have plans for another book?

MIKE: Yeah, I've got a sequel to Looking For Bigfoot coming in the spring. It's called The Progressive Avenger. And Speak English will be in the fall, again, if I can keep my job thing going, keep paying bills. And I am working on a series of books for 2010.

CR: Where can people find copies of Guests and your other eleven books?

MIKE: Guests is available from me, that's it. And there are only about eight or ten copies left. However, I will be offering many of my books for free download from a new website I'm starting on January 1st. It will be called The New American Dream.

It's at www.newamericandream.net

The other books, well, you can go to Amazon, type my name in the search engine.

Also, from New Leaf Books, that's The Last Liberal Outlaw, and Looking For Bigfoot and Cost of Freedom are available from Howling Dog Press.

You can't find any of my books in bookstores.

CR: Thanks for taking the time to answer my questions. Do you have anything else you'd like readers of this interview to know about you, your books, where you'll be appearing on tour or well anything else?

MIKE: No, that's about it.

Thank you very much for the opportunity.

CR: Take care Mike and thanks again. ❊

ON HUMAN SACRIFICES

J. BARRETT LEE

After completing seminary in 2006, my wife and I moved to upstate New York, where she took charge of a small, rural Presbyterian church and I sought employment in the field of human services. I chose this field because I wanted to work in an environment where I could continue to foster relationships with people who live in the margins of society. I wanted to break out of my socioeconomic mold as a middle-class white guy from the suburbs. I sensed a hole in my own theology and spirituality that could only be filled by listening to the stories of those sisters and brothers of Christ who are most different from me.

So I began using buzzwords like *community*, *incarnation*, *solidarity*, and *inclusivity*. I read up on Liberation Theology and the Catholic Worker movement. I got a job doing laundry at a local substance abuse treatment facility and began taking classes to become a counselor. I thought this would be enough to fill that hole in my heart. I assumed that by working in this position, I was serving the "least of these" as if they were Christ himself. What I failed to understand is that the field of human services can be just as self-serving and cutthroat as the fields of politics and business.

The human services system is an industry driven by government regulations, donor appeasement, and "evidence-based practices". Institutional survival is the name of the game in a faltering economy where state agencies are cutting funding and streamlining ineffective programs. Our program is constantly trying to increase the rate of utilization and decrease the rate of recidivism. While everyone smiles and says, "Our clients always come first", the fact of the matter is that the welfare of one drug addict can justifiably be sacrificed when the survival of the institution is at stake. In those moments, "human services" become "human sacrifices" of the worst kind.

I remember sitting in a meeting with the director of a local homeless shelter and hearing him complain, "We've got to do something about these men that have become such a drain on our resources!" This same director refused an open bed to one of my clients saying, "This man has been coming here since the early 1990s. It's time for him to learn to fend for himself." The great irony is that this director was once homeless in the same city, sleeping under bridges because no one would give him a bed.

I have been just as much a part of this destructive system as that shelter director. One evening at the facility where I work, a supervisor's wallet was stolen with a sizable sum of money in it. The supervisor ordered that all clients be strip-searched by staff. I followed orders without question, even though we had no legal right to conduct strip-searches. The events of that night have left a scar on my conscience. I consider the incident to be the greatest moral failure of my life so far. After everything I have studied and believed in, I still violated the rights of God's children because I was ordered to do so by a superior. I am an active participant in the system of human sacrifices.

William Stringfellow pointed out that we are never able to fully escape the domination system of the "powers and principalities" in this world. The best we can hope for, according to Stringfellow, is to "live humanly in the midst of death." I am still struggling on a daily basis to figure out how I am supposed to do that. On one occasion, I kept an elderly gentleman in our facility in violation of state law because the homeless shelter would not give him a bed. On another day, I violated agency policy to complete a treatment-referral for a registered sex-offender before discharging him from our program.

Yet for each incidence of resistance, there is another where I have complied, stayed silent, and benefitted from the system of human sacrifices. I am a sinner who has failed to love God with his whole heart and his neighbor as himself. I am one of St. Matthew's goats who has neither fed the hungry, clothed the naked, visited the imprisoned, nor served the "least of these" as if they were Christ himself.

I love to cross myself with holy water whenever I cross the threshold of a church. In my mind, I descend again into the cleansing waters of baptism and am joined with Christ, who suffered and died in solidarity with all other human sacrifices. I hope to rise again, empowered by the Spirit to live humanly in the midst of death and be God's instrument of peace in the world. ✻

ST. IGNATIUS ON NONVIOLENCE

BOB GRAF

July 31, 2007
The Feast Day of St. Ignatius Loyola

DEAR FRIENDS,

For a number of years I have been struck by the connection between what I would call 'Creative Nonviolence' and 'Ignatian Spirituality.' I started to do some research on this subject and found a lot of articles and essays on Creative Nonviolence and lots on Ignatian Spirituality but very little connecting the two. A while back I wrote for the Living Stones newsletter a brief essay describing some of the connections that I saw. The goal of this page is to foster a dialog on this subject. If you have any thoughts or articles on either Ignatian Spirituality or Creative Nonviolence or, most importantly, the connection, they will be deeply appreciated.

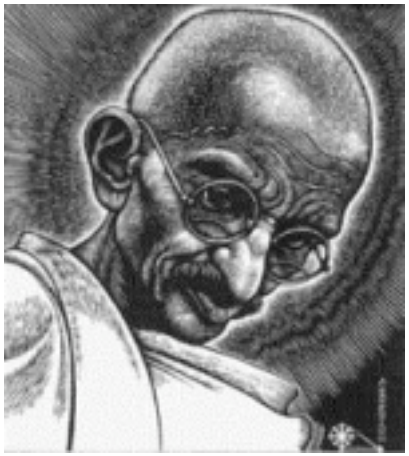
This is a wiki page and you can add to it by asking me for the password, or you can just send me your thoughts or articles at bobsyouruncle@sbcglobal.net and I will gladly display them on this page. Also you can check a proposal for a workshop, Nonviolent Cross that I made for a conference on Ignatian Spirituality and the Cross for the summer of 2008. The proposal was rejected but I do intend to follow up on the presentation.
Ignatian Spirituality and Creative Nonviolence

ST. IGNATIUS OF LOYOLA

A few years ago when I named a session of an Ignatian retreat in daily life "Ignatian Spirituality and Creative Nonviolence", my fellow facilitators were concerned. They associated the word 'nonviolence' with 'pacifism' and said this was Franciscan, not Ignatian, Spirituality.

As a layperson involved with Ignatian Spirituality for many long years, there was a time I would have agreed with them. But no longer. Now I believed 'creative nonviolence' is at the heart of Ignatian Spirituality.

My change of heart had come some years earlier when, during a faith sharing session, a friend spoke of how she struggled with a prayer of St. Ignatius in the Spiritual Exercises. In this prayer (#98) in the second week, Ignatius asks us to pray to the "Eternal Lord and King" for the "desire to be with you in accepting all wrongs and all rejections and all poverty, both actual and spiritual — and I deliberately choose this, if it is for your greater service and praise."



I had read this prayer many times before but this time it struck me that I had heard the same thoughts expressed elsewhere. Then I remembered that persons associated with 'nonviolence', like Gandhi or Martin Luther King Jr, had expressed this same sentiment, so central to the Spiritual Exercises, countless times. Judith Brown in her book on Gandhi defines his Satyagraha or creative nonviolence as "striving nonviolently to the point of sacrifice rather than fighting to attain one's vision of truth." Martin Luther King Jr, in his letter from the Birmingham jail, talks about how "disciplined nonviolence totally confused the rulers of the South." They did not know what to do. "When they finally reached for clubs, dogs and guns, they found the world was watching, and then the power of nonviolent protest became manifest."

GANDHI

Of course Ignatius, Gandhi and King all took their lead from Jesus of Nazareth who said "Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account."

Ignatius, like Gandhi and King, not only expressed this spirit of creative nonviolence but also practiced it in daily life. Ignatius, a soldier who was proud of his sword and his skill in swordplay, after his convalescence and conversion set out from Loyola on a pilgrimage to the famous monastery at Montserrat and

the Shrine of the Black Madonna. After spending the night in prayer before the statue of Mary, in the morning he left his sword and dagger on the earth in front of the statue. In this act, and in the next day exchanging his courtly clothes for those of a beggar, he renounced his past life and truly became a pilgrim on the Way of Jesus.

When Ignatius was twice accused by the Catholic Inquisition of being a heretic he suffered the imprisonment and emerged more determined to spread the good news of Jesus by means of his preaching and directing the spiritual exercises he was forming out of his life experiences.

In The Spiritual Exercises St. Ignatius permeates this guide for spiritual directors with the spirit of creative non-violence. In the Exercises Ignatius expresses a core principle of nonviolence that all creation is created by God (higher power) and is to be used by us to deepen our life in God. Like Gandhi and other promoters of nonviolence, Ignatius asks for an indifference to, or detachment from, all things. Everything, wealth or poverty, health or illness, success or failure, has the potential of leading us to greater love of each other and God. Ignatius puts a lot of emphasis on discernment, finding the true way to doing God's will, the way of peace and love.

MARTIN LUTHER KING

However, like Gandhi, King and others, Ignatius truly believed that love is better expressed in action than in words. St. Francis told his follows to "preach the Gospel and if necessary use words." St. Ignatius says that "love ought to show itself in deeds over and above words." Action is preceded and followed by reflection, which leads to discernment and future action.

There are many other connections between Ignatian Spirituality and Creative Nonviolence. In my limited research so far I have found a lot of similar statements on both sides, among proponents of creative nonviolence and proponents of Ignatius Spirituality. However, few, if any, have attempted to connect the two.

Perhaps the time to do so is now.

THREE WAYS THAT YOU CAN HELP THE CHRISTIAN RADICAL:

- Link to, and visit our blog **www.thechristianradical.blogspot.com** that's where the new online versions get posted each month and it's where you can read news and opinion pieces that don't get published in the zine itself. You can also sign up to receive the online edition in your inbox by writing to **the.christian.radical@gmail.com**

- Show your support by writing an article or sending us some original photography or artwork. The deadline is always the 21st of the month; send your work along with a *very* short bio (40 words or less) to **the.christian.radical.zine@gmail.com**

- Help us print this thing! We're tired of groups who seem more interested in cash money than grass roots participation, that's why we're ad free and don't ask for money. This zine is paid for by the people who print it wherever it's found. If you would like to help with printing it write to the address above and ask us, we'll happily add you to our list of printers.

- If you *really* want to give some money to someone please send your cash to the Vancouver Catholic Worker or a Catholic Worker community in your area. For a list of Catholic Worker communities world wide visit **www.catholicworker.org** or send your money to:

The Vancouver Catholic Worker
1143 East Pender Street
Vancouver BC Canada V6A 1W6

Thanks for reading and thanks for all of your continued support.

Chris Rooney
Karl Germyn
Editors, The Christian Radical.

THE FRAGILITY OF PEACE

ANITA FAST

MICAH 3:5-12
MATTHEW 23:1-12

Nearly 10 years ago now, I went to live in what remains of historic Palestine, now often called the West Bank, which has been Occupied by the Israeli military, and a growing number of Israeli civilian settlers, for 40 years. I did not go as a political activist, but as a Christian, with an organization called Christian Peacemaker Teams. CPT, an ecumenical initiative begun by the Quakers, Mennonites, and Church of the Brethren, is an experiment in non-violent transformation of violence and hostility with the power of God's all-encompassing love.

In 1999 I arrived in Hebron full of hope and the sincere desire to do good, determined to live what I understand to be one of the central commitments of my faith tradition: an unswerving commitment to peace, nonviolence and sacrificial love. Three years later I left with the same commitment, a more tempered concept of 'hope' and a deep unease and uncertainty about what peace, nonviolence, and sacrificial love mean.

It was no longer clear to me that what I had set out to be, a peacemaker, was indeed what I had been. The words of my close Palestinian friend, Nisreen, dug deep into my conscience: "I want to live in peace", she said, "but I don't trust this word anymore. It is a big trick and a dirty word. Talking about peace makes me very angry - more than anything else. Before it was making me laugh. So it is better to say that I don't want to live anymore. And I really start to envy the people who have been killed."

Indeed, many times throughout my stay in Hebron, Palestinian people would approach me on the street, read the label on my hat or armband, "Christian Peace Team" and ask with contempt, "Peace? Where is the peace? There is no peace here." I would quickly agree with them and try to explain that this was why I was there – in order to attempt to help bring peace to that desperate land - but these exchanges most often left me feeling convicted by the same Word of God as that which spoke through the prophet Micah: "They have led my people astray, crying "Peace"…!"

The words of Peace before which Nisreen would rather die, are words that hold out the promise of something longed for with every ounce of our tired and battered bodies, only to discover that they are a smoke screen for ulterior motives, lies which play on the hungers of our hearts. Indeed, the prophets indicted in Micah's diatribe, are using the term only to reassure those who pay their wages, claiming that 'all is well', when all is well only for the powerful ones.

Now I don't want to be a party-pooper, but it does make me pause in the midst of my own celebrations after the election of Barak Obama to the US presidency. The election of Obama is historical and exciting and hopeful on many levels. Yet it is precisely ***because of this*** that we need to listen intently to the words of Micah all the more. To a lesser or greater degree, Empires will always build their cities with wrong and protect their interests with blood. They will always offer charismatic, upbeat, promising words to assure their citizens that they are doing what is right and good and necessary. Empires are like that.

So when we see the bumper-stickers sold to bolster the Barak Obama campaign – with the name "Obama" with the 'O' written as a peace symbol; or his name followed by John Lennon's famous words "Give peace a chance", we might want to pay attention to the days and months and years after the celebrations fade, and the marginalized are left to sweep up the confetti: are the lives of those suffering the injustices leveled against them by the world's superpower any different?

Words of peace when there is no peace are so dangerous because people want so desperately to believe them – this is what made being a pseudo-prophet so profitable.

And so, even I, for whom peace and peacemaking are central commitments in my life and theology, feel ambiguous about the term. To be honest, sometimes I wonder whether our litanies and prayers for peace and justice do more to placate our guilty consciences than they serve to move us to action. It is easy to point fingers at

politicians and leaders who pad their speeches with language the voting public wants to hear, but what about the disconnect in our own lives between our ever-so-eloquent religious language and the nitty-gritty choices we make every day? Jesus' words in the Gospel reading today can be heard as a reminder to practice what we preach, to do more than wear our prayers for peace as long fringes and broad phylacteries, symbolic of our piety and faithfulness, but ultimately empty if they are not part of an active life of service.

Pursuing peace beyond the words will not leave us comfortable Christians comfortably Christian. And yet, at the same time, we must engage the ambiguities of such a commitment. Believe me, the world is not going to cheer for the Christian peacemakers who come to save the day. In Hebron, many Israeli soldiers and settlers called me and my teammates 'Nazis', seeing our care for Palestinians as evidence of our deep hatred of Jews. During talks I gave in Vancouver about the work of Christian Peacemaker Teams I was frequently challenged by voices who wondered how I dare stick my Christian nose into someone else's business after all the destruction Christianity has caused in the world. It seems to me that forsaking even grandiose visions of peacemaking is crucial in a world still bleeding from multiple Christian grandiose visions.

Indeed, I believe that real peace, which is as much, if not more, a gift from God as it is a project, is only to be made within our willingness to be powerless, and to allow the power of that powerlessness, which is the power of God, to do the transformative work. When Micah juxtaposed himself with the prophets of a false peace, he stated clearly that unlike them, **he** was filled with power, with the Spirit of God, with justice and with might – and that power, that justice and might, was a **word of truth** in the face of wrongdoing, not an army, nor numbers power, nor even the majority of votes. A weak and fragile word – the power and justice of God.

In Matthew's gospel, when Jesus spoke about the sort of ideals his followers were to embody, he warned against calling anyone teacher, instructor or father precisely because the power manifested in the Kingdom of God is one of humble servanthood where we engage the world and its complexities with a spirit of humility – willing to be weak and foolish in the eyes of a world which uses violence and war to bolster its mission.

And the irony of it all – or perhaps the promise of this upside-down-bend-all-the-rules sort of Kingdom we pray to "come"; the word from the prophet that grabs us by the scruff of the neck and forces us to see, to really see, the destruction leveled in the wake of our false words and selfish motives – this power and justice from God that tears down all we know and love in-so-far as it is built with wrong - ends up being the very word of life for us and for our world.

Let me tell you a story. One afternoon, I was walking through the old city of Hebron where our Christian Peacemaker Team apartment was located. Hebron's Old City remains fully occupied by the Israeli military. CPT regularly did patrols of the area because incidents of violence between Israeli soldiers or settlers and Palestinian civilians are common. As I was walking through the market with some other teammates, a young Palestinian boy came up and motioned for us to come with him. We followed him to a corner of the market where a group of six or seven Israeli soldiers in flack jackets, helmets, and machine guns strapped around their shoulders, were holding a group of ten Palestinian teenagers spread eagle up against the wall. One soldier was holding a lighter up to a Palestinian boy's hand, but quickly put it away when we arrived with our cameras.

One of the soldiers, a commander, approached me and pulled me aside. "I want to show you something", he said. I had had a few conversations with this soldier before, and he remembered me. He pulled out of his pocket some calendars that the Palestinians had had with them. They had pictures of Palestinian flags, guns, and resistance fighters on them. "See?" said the soldier. He was wanting to point out the violent feelings and aggression of the Palestinians to justify his actions as against a people not deserving to be free or treated justly.

"Yes, I see", I responded. "I am aware of such violence. But do you think that treating these young men in this way will make them hate you any less? They are human beings. Do not take away their dignity. That is not the way to battle the violence they may harbour against you." By the grace of God the soldier listened. Within a few minutes, the Palestinian teenagers were allowed to stand comfortably and shortly thereafter given back their id's and released.

And another story: again I was out on patrol, but this time I came across a Jewish settler who was praying outside the site where Abraham and Sarah are buried in Hebron. Three young Palestinian boys, probably no older than 5 or 6, stood about thirty feet away and threw stones at the praying man. They were acting out of a story of enemies, of "us vs. them", living in the place where it is obvious what you do to those you hate, or those who oppress you. And so I stood in between the young Palestinian boys and the Jewish man. And I said to the boys in very broken Arabic, "Do not throw stones. This man is praying. We all pray to the same God". The boys stopped. They smiled, intrigued perhaps by this foreigner who tried to speak in their language, and came over to me with the curiosity inherent in young children. "To God?" said one of the older boys. "Yes," I nodded. We stood together for a while longer, and after the man had finished his prayers, the oldest boy approached him and shook his hand.

Weak and fragile moments. Anything could have happened. Nothing was certain, and perhaps nothing but the grace of that very moment came of it all. Yet those were moments when I can only hope that my tentative cries for peace did not lead anyone astray, but injected a glimpse of humanity into an otherwise inhuman situation.

If nothing else, what I learned in Hebron was that until we suffer with those who suffer; weep with those who weep; look deeply into the eyes of the Other – even those we deem enemy, crossing the boundaries that have kept us separate from their pain, peace will remain an illusion, a polite way of saying "don't rock the boat", a comfort to those who are comfortable and a sham to those who are suffering the wrongs which make peace impossible.

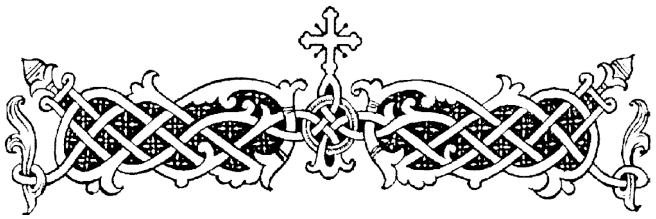
In Israel and Palestine, those building bridges of peace were those who consistently and courageously refused to be kept apart in a world of Otherness. Israelis and Palestinians, together with growing numbers of Internationals, marching across military checkpoints to dismantle the barricades which imprison Palestinians in their villages without water, food, or medical supplies; growing numbers of Israeli soldiers refusing to serve in the occupied territories; International volunteers walking with Palestinian children on their way to school past soldiers and settlers who threaten them with guns and stones; Palestinians inviting Jews to their homes so their children know more of Judaism than the armies and politicians who threaten them; Israeli and Palestinian mothers and fathers whose children have been killed by soldiers or suicide bombers, meeting together and speaking out for real justice and lasting peace so that no more parents are left to weep over an empty bed.

Peacemakers, all of them. Weak and fragile words and actions for the sake of a more livable world.

I speak of my experiences in the land of Palestine, of Israel, but we don't have to go across the globe, or even across town. We can begin on this very day to see the faces of those forbidden us, forbidden our eyes and forbidden our hearts.

And so, when I hear the victory words of Barak Obama "We will change this country and change the world" I can't help but feel a little bit of a shiver run down my spine. The United States of America has all too often spoken of changing the world, and the methods of Empire have far too often left countries and lives in ruins. Yet in the background we can also hear the words of another African American who set out to change his country and the world, and whose nonviolent struggle made the events of these past days possible: Martin Luther King Jr.: "Yet when years have rolled past and when the blazing light of truth is focused on this marvelous age in which we live -- men and women will know and children will be taught that we have a finer land, a better people, a more noble civilization -- because these humble children of God were willing to suffer for righteousness' sake."

And the gift of peace which God holds out for us begs to be opened, slowly, carefully, with courage and perseverance in the midst of ruins and splendor, humility and expectation for the coming of the reign of God. ✣



THE UNITED NATIONS DECLARATION ON SEXUAL ORIENTATION AND GENDER IDENTITY: A CATHOLIC WORKER STATEMENT

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,
DES MOINES CATHOLIC WORKER COMMUNITY

We are past and present Catholic Workers who come together to speak in support of The United Nations Declaration on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity presented to the United Nations General Assembly on December 18, 2008. The declaration condemns violence, harassment, discrimination, exclusion, stigmatization, and prejudice based on sexual orientation and gender identity. It also condemns killings and executions, torture, arbitrary arrest, and deprivation of economic, social, and cultural rights on those grounds.

For nearly a millennium, millions of our sisters and brothers who have been, or were perceived to have been lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender have endured unspeakable acts of hatred and violence that have devastated their lives and, in countless instances, led to their deaths. Today, 77 nations still criminalize these children of God based on their sexual orientation and gender identity, and in seven nations these "crimes" are punishable by death. As recently as 2003, the United States of America still had such laws in effect in several states.

Throughout the history of the Catholic Worker movement, we have stood shoulder-to-shoulder with these sisters and brothers praying together, performing works of mercy together, witnessing for justice together, being arrested together, and sitting in jail together. We have done these things together because we shared a common belief in the teachings of Jesus Christ that the greatest commandment is that we are to love our neighbour as ourselves and that our love is measured by what we do for the least of these.

The sanctity of romantic and filial love inherent in this commandment is self-evident. The clear God-given blessing of these expressions of love inspire us to care for one another as much we care for ourselves and lead us to form families and communities to more closely express, as Jesus taught, that God is Love.

When there is no greater love than that love for which one would lay down one's life for a friend, love so expressed can only come from God. Where there is love so compelling that one will stay true to that love even when it calls one to leave one's father and mother and all that was treasured before that love was known, that love can only come from God. When a love triumphs over grave after grave after grave, that love can only come from God. To confess rather than deny before men the love placed in one's heart by God though men revile you, persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you for its sake is striking and irrefutable evidence of God and that the words of Jesus are lasting and true.

The trust that God has given to his lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender daughters and sons has not been misplaced, and this is evinced by their unfailing witness of love so described. By their fruits, we know them. They have continued to love us, even when we didn't love them, and their labors have led only to a deeper understanding of love, strengthened and expanded communities, reconciliation among the faithful, and a world in which it is easier to love.

To neither cherish nor express our gratitude for this blessing is a desecration of God's love and therefore a sin. This sin is not ameliorated by abstractions or by hiding behind the parsing of terminology or other deviations that serve to rationalize the sin. Exposing this sin, however controversial, does not derail nor shrink any other concern for peace and justice on our path. We know that fearing to take this position now will.

Because historic and contemporary acceptance and practice of a sin does not diminish the obligation of a contrite heart to confess it, we choose to repent. Furthermore, we hold that heterosexist bigotry is not based in nor supported by

the gospels but is a human invention wrought by fear, ignorance, and greed. Therefore, now and forever, we confess all our sins of heterosexism against our lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender brothers and sisters within and outside the Catholic Worker Movement; we ask these sisters and brothers and God to forgive us our sins against them, and we pledge our best efforts to go and sin no more.

As part of our penance, we call upon all nations, in particular the United States of America, all organized entities, and people of faith to join us in repentance and to:

Endorse enthusiastically and without equivocation the 2008 United Nations Declaration on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity as well as any such future declarations.

Renounce all public remarks made regarding lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people that serve to demean, degrade, or foment hostility toward and discrimination against them such as, but not limited to, those comments made by religious leaders comparing them to pedophiles or saying they are more threatening than global warming. Moreover we ask those who have made such ascriptions to confess the cruelty of these words and to recant them.

While we pray and wait for these things, we join hands with our lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender brothers and sisters willing and prepared to share any slight, bear any burden, and suffer any affliction with them until the day they are regarded by all human kind as worthy and equal to us all, as they have always been held in the eyes of God. ✠

BEATITUDE

ARNAL KENEDY

Good pauper, happy pauper
Others pay top dollar to look the way you look
When you roll out of bed
Simple, shabby, and unadorned.
Thrift-store necessity not thrift-store chic
Working with your hands to build today
No hope to purchase the future
Caught on the wrong side of the white picket fence

Good pauper, happy pauper
The Landlord of Heaven has been temporarily evicted
Making his home in your part of town
Walking your cracked sidewalks
And eating at your White Castle
He's come to clean up the neighborhood
And has a place for you in his mansion
Which is yours for the taking

Good mourner, happy mourner
Seeing the world as-is
Your belly aches for all the misery
Your throat catches for all the beauty
The King Mourner comes
Calling the tax-man to account
Wooing the whore to be his lover
Receiving the treasure of the poor

Good mourner, happy mourner
Your feet are sore from wandering
Your eyes swell shut to close out the lies
Your fists clench against injustice
The Chief Cynic twists the plot
Naming your enemies as his beloved

His feet glistening with smutty tears
The stranger becomes host

Good gentle-soul, happy gentle-soul
You don't want to stick it to the man
You don't want to step on the woman
You want them to be happy
Seeing no difference between plumber and prince
You humbly bumble through this vicious world
Confused by oppression and pride
Your tender heart is bruised by inequity

Good gentle-soul, happy gentle-soul
Your mouth curls up to giggle
Your ears embrace the word made flesh
Your fingers tap a song of ascent
Dancing in the retinue of the King of Fools
He knocks over the cash registers of the Christian bookseller
He puts the town slut on the deacon board
He gives the poor his crown

Good famished, happy famished
Your stomach growls for justice
Your throat scratches for righteousness
But the amber waves of grain are a desert
And the Mississippi has dried up
As your children die for oil and sand
As the breadbasket becomes a dust-bowl
And the Church makes dirt-pies

Good famished, happy famished
The Spirit is God's sous-chef
Marinating the days
Sautéing the bitter herbs
To create a culinary masterpiece
Soon you will eat yourself sleepy
And take a nap at Abraham's bosom

As darkness scratches at the window

Good merciful, happy merciful
You've broken the gavel
Tossed aside the stone
Dropped your lawsuit
And torn up your shit-list
Your own shame is still wet
How can you paint guilt on another?
So you stencil the courthouse with doves instead

Good merciful, happy merciful
Your anger has dropped to a whisper
And your wrath has ebbed
Like the tides of God's justice
That carved you into a smooth stone
That skips across the deep
And sinks to the bottom
Where you rest in the cool calm

Good pureheart, happy pureheart,
You don't leave an aftertaste
Like tap water from the white house
Which tastes like steel and rot
And only good for flushing
God uses you to water his orchard
And to make lemonade
Which he serves at fancy dinner parties

Good pureheart, happy pureheart
You see God for who he is
You can see him without your face-melting
Like the Nazis in Raiders of the Lost Ark
You aren't enslaved to power or greed or sex
You don't hoard stuff of whore self
Or treat God like a vendor or pimp

So you're invited to the next dinner party!

Good peacemaker, happy peacemaker
You weld machine-guns into bicycles
And sabers into garden hoes
You grow vegetables in rich soil
And load them into your bike trailer
Where you make vegetarian chili
Share it with your neighbor
And season it with love

Good peacemaker, happy peacemaker
You don't hide away from violence
But lay down in front of it
Calling soldiers to become farmers
And turning tanks into turnip trucks
You dance with your enemy, cheek to cheek
The divine tango of the transformed
A sacred salsa of salvation

Good persecuted, happy persecuted
You've upset the wrong people
For all the right reasons
Some write bad theology against you
While others plot murder
But the roads of the Kingdom of God
Are paved with the bones of the prophets
And are edged with the skulls of the saints

Good persecuted, happy persecuted
You will be roasted, crushed, and French pressed
An earthy-sweet beverage in the mouth of God
But bitter in the mouths of your enemies
They offer you a death sentence
As you offer them your prayers
They are building an Empire
But you dwell in the Kingdom of God ✲

IDEOLOGY THAT DOMINATES OVER FAITH

JIM CONSEDINE

The influence of ideology on faith has been a key concept of Papal encyclicals over the past 100 years. As early as *Rerum Novarum* (1891), Leo XIII was reflecting on the impact of social ideology on workers and wages in an industrialised society and clearly setting out signposts as to how one should influence the other. Pius XI developed those teaching further in his encyclical of 1931 when he spoke of alarm at the rise of ideologies of totalitarianism, and critiqued the 'capitalist regime.' Three decades later, *The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World* of Vatican II focused on the relations between social systems and faith and outlined some clear demarcation points and directions for the future. *'The joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the peoples of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these too are the joys and the hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ. Indeed, nothing genuinely human fails to raise an echo in their hearts.'* (1*)*

But it was Pope Paul VI encyclical *Populorum Progressio* (1968), which spelt out in more depth the implications of the teachings of Vatican II and the relationship between ideology and faith. In claiming 'development is the new way to peace', the Pope clarified essential elements of Christian faith and planted them clearly in the soil of social justice, development and peacemaking. The Pope spoke specifically of action for social justice as 'a moral obligation' and as 'a duty of solidarity' for followers of Christ. If ever justice was seen in the past as an optional extra, this is no longer the case, a fact hammered home in the Bishops' Synod on Justice (1991) which proclaimed that 'justice was a constitutive dimension of living the Gospel.'

Twenty years later, John Paul II went even further. In *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* (1988), he talked about ideologies and faith and in the context of the Cold War and spelt out his alarm at the huge injustices of both major ideologies, corporate capitalism and state socialism, calling them 'structures of sin'. *A world which is divided into blocs, sustained by rigid ideologies, and in which, instead of interdependence and solidarity, rigid ideologies hold sway, can only be a world subject to structures of sin* (36). That is powerful stuff.

He highlighted the dominating role ideologies were having on the practice of faith worldwide and warned Christians to be aware of the dangers of becoming captive to either of the then dominant ideologies, capitalism and Marxism. He did not deny that ideology plays a part in peoples' lives. The key issue was to determine what part it played and to be aware of it. He later went on to note that taking a position of solidarity with the needy and the wretched of this earth, and identifying with the Church's preferential option for the poor were the appropriate ideological positions for followers of Christ. *This love of preference for the poor and the decisions which it inspires in us cannot but embrace the immense multitudes of the hungry, the needy, the homeless, those without medical care, and above all, those without hope of a better future. It is impossible not to take account of the existence of these realities. To ignore them would mean becoming like the rich man who pretended not to know the beggar Lazarus lying at his gate.* (Lk 16/19-31) (42)

In an age of global capitalism and with the world's economies facing financial collapse, the Church's social teaching reminds us to be conscious of the dominant role ideology does play in prevailing cultures and particularly the global economy but cautions us to be wary of it dominating our faith. Transformation by the Risen Christ, while rooted in culture and prevailing ideologies, acknowledges their influence but lives a step beyond them. ✻

WATER PRAYER FOR KITSAP BANGOR NAVAL BASE

CHRIS W. ROONEY

The last weekend of February saw the third retreat of the newly reconstituted Pacific Life Community. I was there with my wife and Sarah from our Vancouver Catholic Worker community. The weekend retreat is a meeting of anti-war and specifically anti-nuclear activists from the Pacific Rim and South West of North America. Catholic Workers, Buddhist Monks and radical journalists came together to hear talks on International Law, Plowshares Resistance, nonviolence and it culminated in a protest vigil outside the gates of Kitsap Bangor Naval Base, home to The Trident nuclear submarines and over 2,300 nuclear warheads making it one of the most heavily armed places in America.

Part of our protest at their gates was a ritual some of us had put together, before the retreat had even started we were all requested to bring water from our region for this purpose. Sarah brought water from a beach in the Downtown East Side of Vancouver, others brought it from as far away as New Mexico and as close as the lake outside the retreat centre.

The day before our action at the base, while some were writing to the local paper about the 1000th Trident patrol and how it wasn't the great thing the paper had made it out to be and still others were making banners for our vigil I helped put the ritual together. My part was a prayer I invoked over all of the water after it had been poured into a large glass vase. After that we all took pine boughs and, while singing "Peace is Flowing Like a River" we sprinkled water on each other and in the direction of the base and soldiers on the other side of our "Free Speech Zone".

As those of us who had chosen this were kneeling down and being arrested I poured out the rest of the water on the cement and watched it run towards the earth by the highway. Below is the text of the prayer I wrote for this ritual followed by the personal mantra of one of the other protesters, John Owen.

These waters have come from many places to mingle here but the truth is they have mixed and separated countless times before now. They have traveled many miles through time, and air, and sand, and rock, and wood, to be with us. We ask God the creator of water, to bless our resistance to the evil of men and to cleanse the land of their crimes.

To that God who's name is Peace, Love and Justice we pray for healing to fall like rain and wash away the sins of greed and violence, and nourish the flowering of love within all people.

Amen.

Be like water, seek the lowest places. Water, by resisting nothing, overcomes everything. ✻

FOR INFORMATION ON HOW TO HELP THE CHRISTIAN RADICAL PLEASE WRITE TO THE.CHRISTIAN.RADICAL@GMAIL.COM

WE BELIEVE SO WE SPEAK
2ND CORINTHIANS 4:13

Mike Palecek is an author peace activist and member of the 9/11 truth movement. He lives in Iowa and maintains **www.newamericandream.net**

J. Barrett Lee is a priest in the Free Episcopal Church. He lives and works in upstate New York with his wife Sarah and their two cats. They had their first child just before Christmas

Bob Graff maintains www.nonviolentworm.org a news and resource website for peace activism he's also the cofounder of www.milwaukeerenaissance.com/
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Anita Fast is a Mennonite peace activist who lives in Vancouver BC, she's a friend of the Vancouver Catholic Worker community and a member of Christian Peacemaker Teams

Arnal Kennedy is a resident of the Los Angeles Catholic Worker and an accomplished poet who reads his poetry regularly in LA, if you would like to get in contact with him you can do so through **www.lacatholicworker.org**

Jim Consedine Jim Consedine Lives in the Thomas Merton CW and has been a member of the New Zealand CW since its inception in 1989. Has been a priest since 1969, and served as a prison chaplain for 23 years in local prisons. Is looking decidedly older. Website - **www.catholicworker.org.nz**

The Christian Radical is edited by Karl Germyn and Chris Williamson Rooney we also have a blog at **www.thechristianradical.blogspot.com** updated daily

The Christian Radical is a project of the Vancouver Catholic Worker Community **www.ca.geocities.com/vancouvercatholicworker**

If you would like to help us out please contact Chris at **the.christian.radical@gmail.com** Thanks.